THE WORK OF CHRIST IN THE WORLD.

FOUR SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

ON THE FOUR SUNDAYS PRECEDING ADVENT
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1854.

BY

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SELWYN, D.D.

BISHOP OF NEW ZEALAND,

FORMERLY FELLOW OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE.

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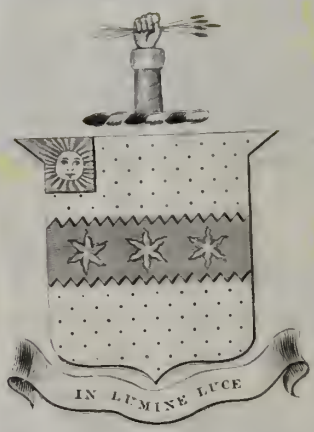

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SERMON I.

JOHN VII. 16, 17.

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.

IT seems to have been the intention of the University, in the establishment of these Preacherships, to extend as widely as possible the range of her religious teaching, by inviting her non-resident members to come in from their distant posts to contribute their stores of experience for the instruction of her students. No plan, I think, could have been adopted more likely to secure our theological system from narrowness of mind and party spirit; and to stamp it with the character of catholic truth and comprehensive charity. It is a peculiar advantage of the highest value, that the annual course of instruction given from this place should include the fresh thoughts and mature experience of all classes

of preachers; that our students should at one time profit by the deep research and exact learning of a professor, and at another time listen to the pastoral love and practised sympathy of a parish priest; and sometimes to a long absent member, who comes back, like myself, from far distant parts, to tell what the power of God's Holy Spirit has done in heathen lands, and among the multitude of the islands of the sea.

It seems then to be the duty of each preacher in his turn to endeavour to fill in his own part in the great outline of Divine knowledge, not intruding himself into the province of others, or aiming at anything for which he has not been qualified, either by the direction of his studies, or the range of his ministerial duties. Those whom God has not gifted with much learning, may still fulfil their calling by speaking forth words of truth and soberness.

The inexhaustible abundance of the word of God and the infinite variety of the works and duties of the ministry, give ample scope for such a cycle of preachers, in which each comes in his turn to tell what the Spirit of God has enabled him to learn, or what the power of Christ has enabled him to do.

And when we consider the audience which assembles here, this cycle of preachers acquires a far greater and more practical importance. For this congregation is not composed merely of learned

men, who meet together to communicate one to another their treasures of mature wisdom, or to ponder well every new interpretation of Holy Scripture, or definition of doctrine. There are many here, who in a few months will diverge from this centre into all the active and influential duties of life. There are those here to-day who in a few years will be statesmen, judges, legislators, magistrates, bishops, cathedral canons, parish priests, missionaries to the heathen. There is scarcely an office in Church or State, the Throne only excepted, which may not be filled hereafter by some one who is here to-day. The comprehensive character of the congregation is a consideration scarcely less important than the catholic nature of the subjects to be taught.

This mixed character of our University congregation, made up as it is of all the elements of our social and national life, seems to prove that it would be highly inexpedient to look upon these Sermons simply as affording an opportunity for refined Biblical criticism, or profound analysis of doctrine. And yet, in a place like this, devoted to intense study, where men of the highest intellectual power are constantly pressing on to new discoveries, and extending the field of knowledge, it is not unnatural that Theology should be viewed in the same light as physical science, that is, as a search after some-

thing new, rather than an application to the heart of truths already certain, and of revelations already complete. Out of this whole congregation there will be very few who will be able to take their place in the forefront of theological inquiry; but there are evident doctrines, and homely duties, which are necessary to all, and yet are apt to be neglected from their very simplicity; thoughts that shine forth from Holy Scripture, like the jewels from the breastplate of the High Priest, conceived in the infancy of the Church, and belonging to an age when the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: and when it was with learning, as with the manna in the wilderness: "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack*:" when unlearned and ignorant men were gifted with a "mouth and wisdom, which none of their adversaries were able to gainsay or resist:" and when men of learning resigned their excellency of speech and of wisdom, and "determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified†."

On this simple ground of Holy Scripture and of the Primitive Church, there may then be a place in your cycle of university instruction for the simpler teaching of your parish priests, or of colonial and missionary clergymen. We can add

* 2 Cor. viii. 15. † 1 Cor. ii. 2.

nothing to your store of learning; but we may bring some fresh instances of the Divine love, some deep experience drawn from the fountains of the human heart, some glimpses of primitive Christianity, granted to the servants of God in their lonely mission field, like the tidings of a new-born Saviour given to the shepherds who kept watch over their flocks by night. It is this hope, and this alone, which has emboldened me to come here to-day, and I pray God that the hope may not be vain.

No one, I think, can rise up in this place to address such a congregation as this without a sense of responsibility both for what he says and for what he leaves unsaid. Words spoken here many years back, and especially by one now gone to his rest*, still linger in my mind. Will anything that God may enable me to say, have a like effect, and so requite the debt which I owe to those who have gone before me? In the midst of this gathering together of mature learning and of youthful energy, will God enable me to sow a seed, which will not be lost, when I shall have returned to my distant Islands, and to the simple worship of my native congregations?

Who can doubt the power of this engine to work for good, when he sees that the great religious

* Rev. Hugh James Rose.

movements of the present age have sprung from the Universities?

Whether it be the great revival of spiritual and personal religion, the renewal of the Image of Christ Himself, of which our own University was the centre; or the restoration of the Bride of Christ to her own place of reverence in the hearts of Christians, of which the sister University was the appointed instrument; both alike, the Spirit and the Bride, the spirit of true religion, and the reverence for the Church, testify the power of these great national institutions to concentrate within themselves the feelings of zeal and energy which God has kindled, and then to dispense them far and wide to clergy and people.

But when I come here to offer up my thanksgiving for this double blessing of pure evangelical religion, and of apostolic order, which has been felt by us in the most distant parts of the world; I am aware that many here are thinking more of the errors and excesses into which some zealous partizans of either cause have run, than of the blessings conferred upon the Church at large by the movements themselves. With such questions as these I feel that I have nothing to do. We have seen men reputed to belong to various sections of the Church, come out among us, with the same pastoral love of souls, and the same lively care for

the conversion of the heathen, and without inquiry into their shades of opinion, we believed their doctrine to be of God, because they seemed to do the will of Him that sent them.

I cannot pretend to speak with the same confidence of the state of feeling here at home, but in the course of a long journey in almost every part of England, I seem to have observed, in the great majority of the clergy, a desire to give up all controversial bitterness, and to devote themselves with earnestness to the great work which lies before them.

It has pleased God to awaken a zeal among us, which our elder brethren in the ministry speak of with astonishment, when they compare it with the indifference of former times. A great and visible change has taken place in the thirteen years since I left England. It is now a very rare thing to see a careless clergyman, a neglected parish, or a desecrated church. The multiplication of schools may well be made the subject of special thanksgiving to Almighty God. The teaching of our public schools and universities has risen to a far more religious character. Even our cathedral system, the last to feel the impulse of the spirit of the times, has put forth signs of life, while many were predicting its extinction.

The natural result of this awakened zeal has been to extend the limits of inquiry, and to give a

new value, never recognized before, to more subtle points of doctrine, and more minute rules of practice. By the law of spiritual forces, the pressure on one point is communicated through every narrow orifice, and to the most remote channels. Each man, in his own line of research, feels the force of the whole moving power, and thinks that Christianity itself and the very existence of the Church depends upon the one little point which he has elaborated for himself. We are apt to forget that in the other chambers of the house of God, there are fellow-workers with ourselves, all actuated by the same spiritual life, all pressed by the same conscientious obligation, all working to the same end, but not in the same exact line, or by the same process: we forget in short that simple rule of St. Paul: "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit: and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all*."

It is easy to see how Christian zeal thus tends to religious strife, by the error of confounding the general blessing of the Spirit of God with the private and special mode in which that blessing may have been obtained. One who has felt his soul raised up to heaven by the harmony of cathe-

* 1 Cor. xii. 4—6.

dral worship, goes forth and denounces the services of the parish-church as cold and defective: another, whom God has enabled to pray with the spirit in the simple words of the Liturgy, condemns the cathedral service as formal and ostentatious. Each man, in that state in which he has experienced the power of the Spirit of God, believes his own rule of worship to be not only the best, but the only safe way of life: and the next step to feeling it useful to himself, is to attempt to enforce it upon others. And thus there is nothing so minute which does not become a new occasion of strife. Music, vestments, rubrics, services, architecture, even gestures of the body and tones of the voice, become elements of discord to rend the peace of the Church.

Still more, when the same spirit of awakened zeal has led to greater earnestness in seeking after truth; and when the highest intellectual powers have been bent upon the deepest mysteries of the faith, then men straightway take pen in hand to attempt to describe that inward radiance of faith, and that unspeakable grace which blesses and sanctifies every act of their worship, and especially that highest of all mysteries, the blessed sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. And these new definitions of doctrine they would impose upon others because they have been felt as

a comfort by themselves; not content with that statement which our own Liturgy has carried to the utmost bounds of language, that when we receive the holy sacrament with a penitent heart, and lively faith, then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us.

But the effect of such questions, thus overstrained, is not to unite men with Christ, but to separate them from their brethren. A doctrine overstated or couched in ambiguous language, calls forth immediately a thousand incompetent tribunals. Men of excited minds on either side rush at once into the deepest mysteries of the Christian faith. None of the combatants seem to pause for a moment to consider that the place whereon they stand is holy ground. And can this be the seeking for truth? Is it not rather to darken counsel, by words without knowledge?

Questions, like those which now agitate men's minds, must be tried by the balance of the sanctuary, or they must be left untried. The coarse and clumsy processes of human law cannot analyze the ethereal elements of the doctrines which link together the life that now is with the life that is to come. To bring in aliens from other professions to judge on legal grounds alone of the meaning of

words, which can have no meaning at all, but by their inward power and application to the heart, would be to deny to the Church, which will hereafter judge angels, the power to judge herself. Or, to leave to private judgment to determine the true doctrine of the holy Eucharist, would be as if each limb of the body had power to define the law of membership which unites the whole. Communion, by its very nature, is the subject of all others, the least open to private interpretation.

It seems then most desirable that the awakened zeal of the Church should be followed up by a revival of the powers of her tribunals of Doctrine. An authority (at least equal to that by which our Articles and Liturgy were framed), is needed to decide, whether the increase of knowledge in the present day will allow of stricter definitions, or greater fulness of language. By that tribunal, and by such a standard only, can these subtle controversies be tried. At present we are engaged in a petty strife, which can only fret, and sting, and irritate, without deciding anything or convincing any one. And then, as a just retribution for our lack of charity, we are told that we are unfit to deliberate; in other words, that the spirit of counsel has departed from us; and that the Church, which has received the promise of the truth, cannot even inquire what truth is.

But if it should be the will of God that no such tribunal of doctrine should be revived within our Church, to meet the greater delicacy of conscience, and the greater earnestness of zeal, which God has awakened among us: if while every sail is crowded upon the ship, there is to be no greater wisdom at the helm: must we go off to seek for comfort in the false assumptions of a self-contradicting infallibility? and resign all use of our judgment, and all hope of counsel, because we cannot have them at present or use them to the full extent? No, there is a better comfort which we can offer to our young men now entering into life, burning to do their duty in that state of life to which God may call them. The words of the text teach us a never-failing comfort: "If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." When other tribunals fail, the best interpreter of Christian doctrine is Christian work; the inward working of faith, combined with the outward working of charity. For faith, untempered by charity, may soar too high: as if the soul, wrapped in the contemplation of its own powers, were to forget the body, and to take thought only of itself. But while faith raises us towards heaven, charity brings us down to the homeliest duties of our daily life, to the care of our children, to the instruction of the young, to ministering to the sick, to comforting the widow, to

visiting the prisoner, to reclaiming the drunkard, to the binding up of wounds, and the washing of feet: and in this region of practical duty we find our test of necessary doctrine. Whatever is really necessary to reform the sinner, to comfort the sorrowful, and to guide the dying on their way to heaven; that, and that only, is the doctrine which God calls upon every man to receive.

Thus, for instance, in our mission work, our standard of necessary doctrine is, what we can translate into our native languages, and explain to our native converts. This we know to be all that is really necessary to their salvation.

There may be a higher heaven to which some chosen servants of God may be raised: there may be unutterable words which only they can hear: visions of glory may be opened to the view of some, which are denied to others: but the range of necessary doctrine we believe to be that which is attainable by all: because the promise is to the wayfaring man, and to the simple, to the poor, and to the blind.

The comfort, then, which I would offer to every lay member of our Church in these days of undecided controversy, is this: pray for Divine grace,—cultivate your own spiritual blessings,—"covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way*." Go to the nearest

* 1 Cor. xii. 31.

school, even among your own children, and try how much you can teach a child. Let charity bring down your mind from its intellectual flight to the level of that little child, whom you have undertaken to teach. Whatever that child can comprehend, is necessary to salvation: all beyond may be the goodly setting of the pearl of great price, but it is not the jewel itself.

And to every young clergyman I would say in like manner: Go to the bed of the dying man; some simple peasant who has read his Bible daily, and walked with God from his youth up; join with him in his last communion; hear his fervent ejaculations; witness his perfect peace; you will not doubt that he has spiritually eaten the flesh of Christ, and drunk His blood; that he dwells in Christ, and Christ in him; that he is one with Christ, and Christ with him; but to find words to define more closely that real presence, and that sacramental union, will be as impossible as to tell by what path his spirit will depart to be with his Lord in Paradise.

Brethren, let us pray for united minds. Let us set an example of Christian men, denying themselves even the luxury of controversy, to do God better service. Let us seek for increase of faith by largeness of charity. While some denounce one another, and bring railing accusations, and use

party names, let us meekly pray for the spirit of counsel; that spirit, which when it has been scared from the higher assemblies of the Church, has lighted upon the lower. Your clerical meetings, I find in every part of England, have brought together men, once thought to be of opposite opinions, and thus charity has led to counsel, and counsel has brought forth truth. These are the signs that the Church thirsts for unity. She feels herself to be separated from Christ, while she is divided against herself. It is not the nature of the sheep of Christ to be scattered abroad. Every beast of prey may range alone, but the sheep must flock together. We have common dangers and common duties enough to bind us together in one body.

May God then give us grace to abjure all party distinctions, and all religious strife, and resting upon the broad basis of our own Articles and Liturgy in their plain and natural sense, to unite cordially, Clergy and Laity alike, in the great work which God has given us to do, a work too vast and too important to allow a single moment to be lost in unprofitable discussion. The scope of that work, reaching even to the ends of the world, it is my purpose, if God will, hereafter to sketch out; but let it suffice for to-day to recognize the duty of taking care that all our works be done with charity, to the edifying the Church to which God has

granted this outpouring of His Spirit. Better than all tribunals of heresy or boards of doctrine, will be the interest of an all-absorbing work; the expansiveness of a fervent charity; the single eye to the one great duty of life; the great cause for which God gave His Son, and for which the Son of God died. "If any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." If any man has this single eye, his whole body shall be full of light.

SERMON II.

Isaiah XLIX. 23.

Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers.

THE subject which we proposed last Sunday, and one, I think, of no small importance in the present day, was the tendency of religious zeal, if not duly guarded and controlled, to occasion strife among Christian men, and discontent with our existing institutions in Church and State. I endeavoured to shew how such feelings tend to exaggerate the importance of minute points of doctrine, or rules of discipline; so as to make men of sensitive minds willing even to give up vast fields of practical usefulness, if they cannot be satisfied upon every speculative question.

The simple remedy suggested, was to look first to the work; to think of the woe pronounced upon him who preaches not the Gospel; and the

sentence upon the unprofitable servant who hides his talent in the ground; and then to fear, lest in seeking for a minute agreement with our fellow-servants in the verbal definition of our duty, we should be tempted to leave the duty itself undone, or even to desert the Church in which we have covenanted to discharge it. And we guarded this recommendation against any charge of latitudinarian indifference to abstract truth of doctrine, by asserting, that in the abeyance of all the real tribunals of doctrine, that is, of the general councils of the Church catholic, and of the council of our own branch of the Church, the best remaining security for truth of doctrine is real, scriptural, and united *work*. And in this assertion we relied upon the promise of our blessed Lord, that "if any man will do His Father's will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God*;" and upon the other promise in the Sermon on the Mount, that, "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light†."

In following out the same line of thought, we are naturally led to the consideration of the great duty of obedience, second in importance only to faith, and proceeding from it: so that in the covenant which we made with God in baptism, when the question had been asked: "Dost thou believe?" there followed immediately the other: "Wilt thou

* John vii. 17. † Matt. vi. 22.

obey*?"—And what is more likely than, that in an age of religious zeal, many doubts and questions should arise about a duty so important as this, and that in endeavouring minutely to adjust our duty of obedience to God and man, difficulties should arise of the same kind as those which meet us at every step when we attempt to define accurately by human language the doctrines of God.

On this point the cardinal mistake seems to lie in making our obedience to depend upon our power to determine with exactness the bearing of each duty upon the other, and the nature and boundaries of each. If this precision of adjustment cannot be attained, it seems as if some thought themselves absolved from all duty of obedience. Thus the most conscientious minds, from a mistaken sense of duty, are often most in danger of the sin of disobedience.

Yet we may look upon it as a happy age, in which the chief errors arise from an excess of conscience: and such faults must be treated lovingly and with tenderness, because they have their seat in the finer processes of the heart's best affections. And in this spirit let us pray to be enabled to regard them: not harshly repelling every brother who has felt the unsettling power of this age of lawless speculation; but charitably weighing his

* Baptismal Service.

conscientious scruples, and assisting to remove them. And the first thing necessary, is to recognize the difficulty of the question; for there is scarcely any question more really difficult than the limits of obedience, as due respectively both to God and man. For the duty of obedience to God rests upon an unchangeable and eternal law, ordained by a Father, "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*;" and a Saviour, "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever†." The ordinances of that eternal law all have their origin in the sacrifice of the Lamb, fore-ordained before the foundation of the world; who "offered Himself to God" by an "eternal spirit." The partakers of that grace are men whose names, throughout eternity, have been written in the Lamb's book of life, chosen out of all nations and kingdoms to be the children of God: and "if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ‡." The mediator of that law, and the steward of those ordinances is the Bride of Christ, the Church, which the Son of God has purchased with His own blood; a Church which has received the commission to "go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature§," and with it the promises, that "her Lord will be with her alway, even to the end

* James i. 17. † Heb. xiii. 8.
‡ Rom. viii. 17. § Mark xvi. 15.

of the world*," and "that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it†." And whithersoever this Church may go, she can carry with her no other law than that which was received by the disposition of angels, and written with the finger of God, and proclaimed by prophets, and preached by Him who spake as never man spake, and given by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and sealed by the blood of martyrs, and guarded against change by the solemn warning of the last of the apostles, when he closed the sacred volume: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life‡." This is the obedience which we owe to God, to His Son, to His law, to His gospel, and to His Church; and all these are eternal and unchangeable; the same in every age and at every place.

But the rule of obedience to man has no such absolute uniformity; because the law itself is continually changing. There was a duty of obedience in Joseph to the Pharaoh who placed him at his own right hand; and in Moses to the other Pharaoh who knew not Joseph; and there was a

* Matt. xxviii. 20. † Matt. xvi. 18.

‡ Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

duty of obedience which Naaman owed to Benhadad, and which the three children owed to Nebuchadnezzar, and which Daniel owed to Darius. And there was an obedience which the Apostles owed to the Jewish magistrates, and an obedience which in the time of the worst of the Roman emperors, St. Paul acknowledged to be due, as to powers ordained of God; and in remembrance of which, St. Peter, in the same times of Pagan rule, taught all men to "fear God, and honour the King*." In the midst of this ever-varying succession of human governments, and change of human laws, one invariable principle cleared up all doubt, and guided the actions of all the servants of God: "We ought to obey God rather than men†."

And yet there was no straining at gnats or magnifying scruples. No man courted martyrdom to shew his zeal for God. Daniel did not fly in the King's face, or pray in the corners of the streets, that he might be seen of men; and so die the death of a braggart, rather than a martyr. Spies had to peep into his house to prove that he was disobeying the king's decree. Neither did Elisha straiten the cords of conscience, when he bade Naaman go in peace, and, if duty bound him wait upon his master, even in an idol temple: nor

* 1 Pet. ii. 17. † Acts v. 29.

did St. Paul encourage minute scruples of conscience, when he allowed his Christian converts to eat without asking questions for conscience' sake, because to them an idol was nothing in the world: reserving only the case of anything that might be a stumbling-block to others, and for that case enacting the rigid rule, "to eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest he should make his brother to offend*."

There is then a repose of conscience which is far removed from laxity, and which offers, I believe, the true solution of many of the most intricate problems of our mixed state as servants and subjects both of God and man. It is true that the Son of God Himself has said: "No man can serve two masters†:" but it is also true that the Spirit of God has said: "Fear God: Honour the King‡." There must then be a harmony between the two duties, the duty to God, and the duty to man, however they may seem to be brought into conflict: and how shall that harmony be found?

There was a harmony between the two duties, when the captive maid from the land of Israel said to her mistress: "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria§;" and when Daniel greeted the king who had thrown him into the

* 1 Cor. viii. 13.
† Matt. vi. 24.
‡ 1 Pet. ii. 17.
§ 2 Kings v. 3.

lions' den, with the loyal salutation: "O King, live for ever*."

And there was a harmony between the two duties when the Son of God commanded tribute to be paid to all to whom it was due; to the temple which had been made a den of thieves; and to the Cæsar, by whose power the sceptre had departed from Israel.

And there was the same harmony, when the men who gnashed upon Stephen with their teeth, heard him pray, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge†;" and when they looked upon that man of God, as he gazed stedfastly up to heaven, and "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel‡."

But most of all was there a harmony between the duties to God and man, when He who is both God and man fulfilled the whole law, and was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross: when the Son, equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, learned obedience by the things that He suffered. God and man were alike obeyed, and all righteousness was fulfilled, when the Son of God prayed in his agony, "Father, not my will, but thine, be done§;" and when the Lamb of God was dumb before his shearers: "when he was reviled, yet reviled not again; when he suffered, yet

* Dan. vi. 21.
† Acts vii. 60.
‡ Acts vi. 15.
§ Luke xxii. 42.

threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously *."

Thus out of the mist of controversy, and cloud of conflicting duties, a clear beam of light seems to fall upon a handwriting nailed to our Saviour's Cross: "That love is the fulfilling of the law †." "If ye love me, keep my commandments." The captive maid, who prayed for her master, the martyrs, who loved and blessed their persecutors, and prayed for their murderers, found the true and only solution of a question which has perplexed all ages, and still perplexes our own. By that spirit of patient love they drew near to Him who fulfilled every law both of God and man, and by His perfect obedience made satisfaction for the transgressions of the world.

With such examples before us, as the captivity of Israel, the persecution of the prophets and martyrs, and above all, the death of the Son of God Himself, it surely can be no reasonable ground of wonder that the Church should still have something to bear. Would it be the better for her to be so entirely exempt from every kind of cross, as to have no fellowship with the sufferings of her Lord? And yet many seem to be dissatisfied, if they cannot at once have every thing as they could wish; and seem to make their adhesion to their own Church

* 1 Pet. ii. 23. † Rom. xiii. 10.

depend upon the removal of all their objections, or the adoption of all their plans.

There is reason to fear that a great delusion often lurks under this plea of conscience. An over-scrupulous conscience may often be the mere veil for a lack of charity. If a man really loves his Church, and honours his Queen; if he loves his neighbour whom his position in the Church enables him to assist; if he is a clergyman, and loves his poor and his school; real heart-strings are not so ready to part asunder for every trifling difference of opinion or pressure of circumstances. There is nothing so tenacious as love. "Charity beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*."

But what after all is it that we have to bear? Is it the Royal Supremacy that has become so grievous in our Church, that for that cause we should fly to the Church, in which "Religion with her own hands administers a kingdom of this world;" and in which, as it has been well said by a modern writer, "The throne depends not on the will, the wisdom, the affections, or even the indifference of the people, but is wholly and undisguisedly sustained, in despite of their aversion, and in constant fear of their resistance, by foreign arms†"?

* 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

† Gladstone, *On the Royal Supremacy*, p. 28.

To such a connexion as this between Church and State shall we fly for refuge from our own?

No, brethren, let us rather seek for comfort in judging ourselves and mourning over our past neglect. Let us take to ourselves, as members of the Church, the blame of most of the difficulties which now complicate our relations with the State. The powers of the world, since they embraced the Gospel, have not been backward in assisting the Church. There was no lack of zeal in Darius, when his own conscience was convinced, to make a decree that men should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. The council of Nice had no reason to complain of a want of support from Constantine. Church and State united their efforts at the Reformation to secure truth of doctrine, and to enforce it upon all men.

But was the Church alive to the evil consequent upon connexion with the State? that it was not so much the danger of interference with her doctrines, or of controul over her courts, or of abuse of her patronage, or of confiscation of her revenues: but it was the danger that the secondary motives to action should be put in the place of the highest: that preferment should be more thought of than the love of souls: that court favour should be more valued than the praise of God: that the Gospel should be preached to the rich more willingly than

to the poor: that permanent endowments and secular rank, and domestic ease, should abate the fervour of ministerial zeal: and thus the Church should become less the Church of the people, while the people was entering more and more into possession of the powers of the State.

All this took place, because, at the Reformation, a great principle was enunciated, but not carried out. The Bible was opened, but it was not taught. Private judgment was recognized, but it was not guided or informed. Bishopricks were not multiplied, nor parishes subdivided as the population grew. Cathedrals were furnished with the means of usefulness, but they were allowed to remain inactive. The Church was to be the Church of the people, and yet vast masses were left to grow up in ignorance. Then came the difficulty of the connexion between Church and State: because the Church was no longer the mother of all the people.

Why should we wonder that difficulties meet us at every step in such a state of things as this? If secular tribunals usurp the jurisdiction of the Church; if the voice of her great council is silenced; if dissenters are admitted into our universities; if men of all religious opinions are elected to serve in parliament; if now, for the first time, the census of the population represents, however erroneously, the multiplicity of our divisions; let us not disguise

the conviction, painful though it may be, that all these things are the inevitable results of years of past neglect. We might have kept the ground which others have won.

But the Church is not therefore lost. Her doctrines are not compromised. Her creeds are not abrogated. Her articles are not convicted of error. No decision of any incompetent tribunal, no pressure of external power, no fire of persecution, no straitness of bondage, can affect the eternal truth, which God has for ever united with His Church; and which no man can sever from it. It touched no point of the eternal truth of God, whether Darius prohibited prayer—or again, commanded all nations to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. The truth was not lost, because Ahab killed the prophets of the Lord. The Church did not prosper less under the heathen emperors than when kings became her nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers. The Church was not lost, when she awoke from her trance, and "found herself Arian." The eternal truth did not perish in the great schism which rent asunder the East and West, and silenced, perhaps for ever, the ecumenical councils of the Church. No judgment was pronounced on the real nature of the sacrament, or the real duty of obedience, when three bishops were sentenced to the stake, or seven to imprisonment. Such

judgments, so far as they were inconsistent with the eternal law of God, were simply null and void; annulled in the court of heaven, even before they were pronounced by the lips of man.

But can we liken our own difficulties to the deep and heart-searching trials of those former days? "We have not yet resisted unto blood." "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds*."

If it be true that the eternal law of God is enshrined in imperishable monuments, and that the gates of hell will never prevail against His Church, what have we to fear from any changes of human laws, or any errors in the judgments of man? Rather let us take a calm and loving view of all around us: of our Queen upon the throne, and upon her people of every class.

Surely no one will liken the Royal Supremacy as it now is, to the same power as it was of old. What earthly type can more duly represent the sovereignty of heaven than the simple majesty which all revere, not for its outward signs of power, but for the inherent sanctity of the Lord's anointed. The time is within the memory of us all, when the fountains of the deep of anarchy seemed to be broken up, to overwhelm all Christendom with the flood of lawless

* Heb. xii. 3, 4.

passions. At that time it pleased God, not for our goodness, but in His own wisdom, to take a little child, and set her in the midst: and her throne remained unshaken in the "day of great slaughter, when the towers fell," and when "kings with their armies did flee and were discomfited."

To that throne the Church pays her willing homage. Modern changes may affect the personal supremacy which we all acknowledge to be due to the Lord's anointed; ministerial responsibility, the power of parliament, extension of empire, the multiplicity of sects—all may affect the counsels which surround the throne: but it is the throne itself to which we yield our allegiance, as to a power ordained of God.

Nor would we add one single care to those which now surround the rulers of the State. In times of pestilence and war, we come down from our synthetic controversies, from Church and State, and parliaments, and all the complex problems of our body politic, to the elementary particle of our Christian commonwealth, to the individual soul. This is not a time to rend the Church with questions, when all ought to unite on every side to stay up her hands in prayer for her bleeding and dying children. All other questions of the day give place to this: In what state of heart are our brethren whom we send out to die? On that narrow peninsula on which all

thoughts are fixed, there are twenty-five thousand men who own the Queen's supremacy, and obey it to the death. Oh! what would we now give to be assured that every man who has fallen on the field of battle was prepared to die! They once were children in our schools; would that we had taught them more. They were quartered in our peaceful towns; would that we had cared for them more. Our own pupils and our own parishioners are among those who may already have gone up to the deadly breach: was it a "forlorn hope," or was it a "hope full of immortality"?

Such thoughts as these will send us out into the dark masses of our uninstructed people, there, under God's grace, to repair by earnest work an evil which admits of no other remedy. Let the Church do its duty; and the State and the Church may again be one. High over our heads is the law of God, eternal and unchangeable; in our hands is the transcript of that law given by the inspiration of God himself: far back in remote antiquity are the records of councils such as will never meet again, the voice of a Church united in itself: and here in our Prayer-Book, stamped with the seal of Church and State, are prayers which lead us on from baptism to the grave, and through the grave to heaven: and creeds and articles, to fix the young or the wandering mind upon the fundamental truths of our most

holy faith: and above all, there is the Holy Communion to make us one with Christ, as Christ is with God; and to unite us all, as brethren, one with another.

Surely it is our bounden duty to receive this treasure into our hearts, and then to go out into our families, our neighbourhoods, our parishes, our schools, among our children and god-children, servants and labourers; to prisons, and hospitals, and workhouses, and almshouses, even into the highways and hedges, and there to deal with every single soul as if our own lives depended upon the issue. If this be done, the Church will soon, by God's blessing, reabsorb all dissent within herself; for every sect is still part of the Church; "they have departed for a season, that we might receive them for ever, as brethren beloved, both in the flesh and in the Lord*."

No time was ever more favourable than the present, when the vast stream of emigration relieves the pressure of that annual increase, which formerly absorbed all efforts made for church extension, and left the arrear as great as before. Now, every effort must tell: every church and school that is built will be an augmentation of force. And may God move this great University to be foremost in the work of Christianizing England. Fill all your

* Philem. 16.

chairs of science, follow up every hidden law of nature, and trace out the minutest particles of matter, and every microscopic form of animated life; but let it be done only by men whose profession it is, and a few chosen scholars to hand down the torch of science from generation to generation; but teach the rest of this vast body, not to follow in the footsteps of men whom they can never overtake, nor to waste their time in verifying results, which they may safely take upon trust, from those who have proved them; but to devote themselves to the study of *man*, and of *man's soul*, and of the works of God, as seen in their noblest exercise, in the salvation of the world.

SERMON III.

Genesis XVII. 4.

My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

OUR thoughts were directed last Sunday to the Throne, the Church, and the People of England. And, after acknowledging and deploring the spiritual destitution which still prevails in many parts of this country, we thanked God for that wonderful exercise of His providence, which has opened for us in the most distant parts of the world attractive fields of emigration, and has thus relieved the State from its load of pauperism, and the Church at home from that vast annual increase of population which formerly absorbed all its efforts, and left untouched the arrears of past generations. When it was proposed that forty new churches should be built in the suburbs of London, it was calculated that before they could be finished, the population would have increased in a proportion far exceeding

the supply. In the course of twenty years of uncommon energy in church building, from 1815 to 1835, for every seat provided in a new church seven claimants were born. We seemed to be always working without advancing towards the one object of our desire, of filling all England with the means of religious instruction.

But now, while every good work goes on with unabated energy, the increase of our people, which seemed to make the work almost hopeless, is suddenly removed; and every effort now tells upon the mass that remains: and tends to redeem the neglect of past years. It is a most encouraging thought: but it must be accepted with caution: and our inquiries to-day must be directed to the other side of this great question, and to the duties involved in it.

For it is true that vast numbers of our people, nearly a thousand a day, are leaving their native country to go to our own colonies, or to that other country, scarcely less our own, connected with us by the ties of race, of language, and of religion, the United States of America. But we must remember that it is the people only that go; they carry with them, it is true, some of the things *most* needful for them,—the Bible, and the Prayer-Book, and above all, the ever-present blessing of the Spirit of God. But they carry with them none of the

endowments; none of the learning; none of the privileges of the Church at home: the younger son, when he goes into a far country, does not receive that portion of goods which falleth to him; they go out to find the consequences of disunion in England visited upon the colonies, the Church separated from the State; counted as one of many sects, dependent upon voluntary aid: and yet supposed to be subject to the same restrictions, and liable to the same claims, as those which have been established in England by the terms of the mutual compact between Church and State.

This then is our subject for to-day — the Church in the colonies: and may the Spirit of God guide us in our inquiry.

First, let us take our stand upon scriptural ground, and see what are the promises upon which we can rely. For though I have touched upon the peculiar difficulties of the colonial Church, and have still more to say upon that subject, one word of promise, covenanted by God Himself, will more than outweigh all difficulties, if they were tenfold greater than they are. If we can only be convinced that we may safely take to ourselves, and apply to our own comfort, such words as those of the text, and many others of the same meaning, we shall not lightly be discouraged by present hindrances, or by the want of sufficient means.

Of all the characters of Scripture, the one best adapted to be the guide and example of the colonist is the patriarch Abraham. The entire surrender of his own will to the calling of God: his faith in leaving his own kindred, still living in idolatry, to go, he knew not whither: his perseverance in duty, shewn in his commanding his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord: his zeal for religion, in building an altar wherever he pitched his tent: his reverence for God's ministers, as shewn in his reception of Melchizedek: his humility, though the holiest of laymen, in accepting a blessing from a priest of the Most High God: his entire reliance upon the promises of God, as shewn in the sacrifice of Isaac, and his patience in waiting for their fulfilment; himself contented to die, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off: all these are lessons for the emigrant, whose course of life will be well ordered, if it is begun, continued, and ended, like Abraham's, in faith in God, and a patient waiting for Christ.

It is evident that the covenant of God with Abraham was intended as a lesson to all people, because there was no other promise so often or so strikingly repeated. Three times* was the promise renewed to Abraham, that he should be the

* Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18.

father of many nations, and that in him and his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. Isaac and Jacob were the heirs of the same promise, pronounced to each of them in the same words*. And God Himself gives the reason in Gen. xxvi. 5, "Because Abraham obeyed His voice, and kept His commandments, His statutes, and His laws."

The words of St Paul to the Galatians bring down the promise to our own time, and as it were, offer it to us: "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham†."

John Baptist declared the same truth, when he said: "that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham‡." And it was confirmed by our Lord Himself, when, commending the faith of the heathen centurion, (faith such as he had not found, no, not in Israel), He added: "I say unto you, that many shall come from the East and

* Gen. xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14.

† Gal. iii. 6. ‡ Matt. iii. 9.

West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven*." And all these hopes of nations, and this gathering together of the elect from the four winds of heaven, were to spring forth from that one seed of the Church, that lively faith, by which "Abraham saw the day of Jesus Christ, and rejoiced to see it†."

Here then is the great prize of nations: the prize of their high calling, to be the stewards and evangelists of the Gospel. Abraham is the Father of many nations; and the question is in each age of the world, which of the many children of Abraham shall inherit the birthright? The answer is simple. It is that nation which has most faith. Many branches have already been cut off from that tree of life; and St. Paul tells us in Rom. xi. 20, that "because of unbelief they were broken off;" and that they who remain stand by faith. God spared not the natural branches, His own chosen and peculiar people: and to every nation, to whom God commits in the succession of ages the same stewardship of the Gospel, St. Paul repeats the warning: "Take heed lest He also spare not thee‡."

"Be not highminded," saith the same apostle, "but fear§." It may be that we may say, even with more truth than it was said of the Jews:

* Matt. viii. 11.
† John viii. 56.
‡ Rom. xi. 21.
§ Rom. xi. 20.

"What nation is there so great?" but dare we finish the sentence, "who hath God so nigh unto them?" We may use such words as those in which we have prayed to-day: "for Christ's holy Catholic Church, particularly that pure and reformed part of it established in this Kingdom;" but before we can presume to use them, we must take care that they are not mere words of idle boasting of deeds done by our forefathers ages back; but a solemn covenant which we of the present day make with God, that, by the help of His grace, we will make our pure part of His Church the means of informing all that are in ignorance, and of reforming all that are in error. The day of negations is past. Faith lies not in denying, but in affirming: in advancing the banner of the Cross, not in defending it in the camp. When truth is most earnestly propagated, then heresy is best refuted. Our part of the Church will be most pure, when it strives most zealously to fill up the measure of the Church Catholic, and to make it holy.

If then our nation would claim the stewardship of Abraham to be the Father of many nations, our National Church must work in faith. She must not say: We have heathen at home: look at the ignorant masses in our manufacturing towns: our first duty is to them. If Abraham had thus reasoned, if he had thought only of his idolatrous relations in

Ur of the Chaldees, he would have lost the promise, that in him and in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed. Chaldea would have gained nothing, and the world would have lost everything.

It may seem a hard thing to have both works to do at the same time: to attack a citadel close at hand, and to advance against an enemy in the field; but Divine faith, like human courage, rises with the greatness of the difficulty: for it is the very office of faith to attempt things seemingly impossible; because it knows and acts upon the conviction that all things are possible with God.

Now, brethren, all the while that this bidding prayer has been read in this Church every Lord's day, in which we speak both of the Church Catholic, and of our part of it, the proportion which our part bears to the whole has gone on yearly increasing. What is now meant by the part, is widely different from the part as it was understood when that prayer was first composed. It now includes, besides the united Church of England and Ireland, forty-six colonies of the British Empire, six Scottish bishopries, twenty-eight colonial bishopries, thirty bishopries of the sister Church of the United States, still undivided from its mother in the midst of civil convulsions, and joining with her still in prayer and communion.

Now, I ask, have hearts at home expanded as our empire has grown: or has our diocesan and parochial system, which is at once the strength and the weakness of our Church, narrowed up minds here at home, and unfitted them for that wider range of thought, which is needed for the direction of a work now by the grace of God extended throughout the world? I answer, thankfully, that much has been done. Appeals, like that which was made here in the Ramsden Sermon of 1852, for parochial associations in aid of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, have not been made in vain. Thousands of English parishes are now sending out their yearly offerings to supply the wants of the colonial churches. Heart-cheering meetings of clergy and laity are held in many of our cathedrals, where with solemn prayer and Holy Communion alms are offered up for the work of the propagation of the Gospel.

Nor must I omit to mention the great effort which was made, fourteen years ago, for the extension of the Colonial Church; all the archbishops and bishops of England and Ireland concurring in the work. My own bishopric was the first of fourteen which have been founded, one for every year; and this University has not been backward in sending out her chosen sons to preside over those distant dioceses. And as in private duty bound, I may be

allowed to express my thankfulness, that five out of the fourteen have been supplied by the ancient College of St. John. And no less must we praise God for those faithful servants whom this University has sent forth to die in the mission field: for Henry Martyn, and for Thomas Whytehead, and other kindred spirits who have died in their Master's work; or who still live to devote their best energies to the work of filling up the measure of England's duties, and of hastening the completion of the Redeemer's kingdom.

It was full time that this awakening should come: for the stewardship of England seemed to be passing away. She had enlarged her empire, but she had not extended her Church. She seemed to be, not the mother, but the step-mother of nations. India asked her for bread, but received a stone. North America was long stinted to a presbytery, faithful indeed and earnest, but unable to reproduce itself. Slavery rested like a dark and chilling cloud upon the West Indian Islands. The last native of Newfoundland died a heathen outcast. The remnant of the Tasmanian blacks, caught like wild beasts, were dwindling away in the little island chosen to be their prison. Search might be made in vain in Sydney and its neighbourhood for a single native of Australia; but one might be found from time to time—in the condemned cell. The sin of blood-

guiltiness was upon England. In every country which we had occupied the voice of our brother's blood cried unto God from the ground. Could we be the true children of Abraham, the fosterfathers of many nations, when we had carried with us only the fire and the knife, but not the Lamb?

I know of no human power by which this torrent of evil was arrested in its course, but the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. It was that which saved our settlers from the guilt of first destroying their native brethren, and then filling up the measure of their iniquity by abjuring religion and denying God. Nor must we judge of the work of that Society by what we see now, in an age when all classes of Christians have been roused by God's grace to vigorous efforts in the cause of the Gospel. It was a time of religious lethargy, when men slumbered and slept, that a few faithful men met for counsel and for prayer, and collected their scanty revenue of two or three thousand pounds to sow the seed of a Church, whose branches were to overspread the world. They sowed in faith, and the Spirit gave the increase. And now there is not a colony of the British Empire, nor a congregation in the United States, which does not acknowledge its debt of gratitude to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; and as we well know, on the occasion of its third Jubilee, full fifty dioceses, in

America, in India, in Africa, in Australia, even to New Zealand itself, the most distant of all, joined in one tribute of filial love to the Society which had been the foster-parent of them all.

But in all this we cannot fail to remark the overruling Providence of God, which so orders the course of human events, that, in the midst of national indifference, private zeal is often raised up to stand in the gap, and avert the Divine displeasure. And to what have we now to trust but to private zeal, when the State is paralyzed by religious divisions, and when the spirit of counsel has departed for a season from the Church? Where is the power to command, which shall supply every colony of the British Empire with the ministers of the Gospel, as I have seen the wild hills of New Zealand guarded by the soldiers of the British army, and its harbours by the seamen of our fleet? When will we learn the lesson that the sacrament of the soldier of the Cross binds him by a far higher obligation, to fight manfully under his Lord's banner, and to bear it to the utmost bounds of the habitable globe?

Is there then no voice to call, no power to command, because the State cannot, and the Church does not speak? There was no earthly power to command Abraham to leave home and kindred, and all that he had; but it was the voice of God that

spake within him. And the same voice of God is speaking now; yes, speaking to us, calling upon many of us here present to go to some Mount Moriah, some place afar off which God has chosen for the field of our future ministry. A large part of this congregation either are or will be clergymen. It is to them I now speak. We have had a lesson which will make us ever grateful to our brave men and brethren in the camp and in the fleet. We have learned from them, not to serve God worse than they have served their country and their Queen. We can trace their footsteps written in their own blood, in India, in Cabul, in Burmah, in China, in Southern Africa, in New Zealand, in Turkey, and in Tartary: we have seen them rush to the post of danger as the post of honour; and bear without a murmur such hardships and privations as none of us have ever experienced for a day. Now, my brethren, God expects from British clergymen no lower scale of duty than England requires of her soldiers and her seamen. If we shrink from the deep poverty and loathsome misery and pestilential sickness of our towns, henceforth we are disgraced for ever. If we leave Satan master of a single spot of earth—of one single stronghold where he reigns supreme; if we have not men of energy, and piety, and learning, in every Colony and in every branch of our Church, again I say, we are

disgraced for ever. Rather let our endowments be scattered to the winds, than that they should tempt us to prefer ease to duty, and to forget, in the comforts of home, what it is to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

There is no power to call or to command: but the blessing will be still, as it was in the days of Deborah and Barak, upon those who willingly offered themselves. You know the wants of the Colonial Church. There is your well-known friend, the bishop of Melbourne, with his population quadrupled, but with his clergy so thinned by sickness and death, as scarcely to have increased in number. And there is our new bishop-elect of Sydney, who will go out to find his clergy reduced in number by seven, since the departure of our late revered metropolitan, Bishop Broughton. And there is the bishop of Natal, seeking for aid to convert his Caffre tribes; and the bishops of Jamaica, British Guiana, and Sierra Leone, mourning over the ravages which pestilence has made in their bands of ministers. I forbear to speak of myself, because it has pleased God to cast my lot in a fair land, and a goodly heritage; and in the healthful climate of New Zealand, and among the clustered isles and on the sparkling waves of the Pacific Ocean, there is too much real enjoyment, for me to be able to invite any one to unite himself with

me, as an exercise of ministerial self-denial. But we also want men of mind and of faith to mould the institutions of our infant colony—men who can live in the midst of disturbing elements, and yet themselves remain unshaken; with buoyant hope to bear them up in the midst of downward tendencies; and cheerfulness to work on in spite of discouragement: men who can stamp upon a new community an image of themselves, and yet give to God all the glory. And we have need of men, who can retain unbroken their allegiance to the Crown and to their Mother Church in the midst of a total separation between Church and State: men who, when the laws which govern the Church at home no longer bind them, can be outlaws without being rebels; using their freedom for more active energy in work, but not as a cloke of licentiousness: men who can be dependent upon their congregations, without being subservient; and bold in rebuking sin, yet gentle in their admonition of the sinner. Above all, we need men, who can stand alone, like heaven-descended priests of the Most High God, in the midst of the lonely wilderness, where a few shepherds feed their scattered flocks, with no comforter, but the Spirit of God—no friend, but their ever-present Lord; without father, without mother, without house or land, or church, coming, men know not whence, and

going, men know not whither; yet marked and known as the men of God, by the bread and wine which they bring to every patriarchal camp, where the Abrahams and Lots have built their domestic altar, and there command their children and their households after them to keep the way of the Lord. There are such minds here present: hearts which God has enlarged to the comprehension of the whole field of our Christian duty, and who are ready to undertake the work of Christ in any part of His field to which they may be called. But they are as backward to offer as the Church is backward to call. One or other must break through this natural reserve. Offer yourselves to the Archbishop: as twelve hundred young men have already offered themselves to the commander-in-chief. Let the head of our Church have about him, as his staff, or, on his list of volunteers, a body of young men, who are willing to go anywhere, and to do anything. Then we shall never lack chaplains either for our soldiers in the field, or for the sick and wounded in our hospitals; nor clergy for our colonies; nor missionaries for the heathen. If but fifty men in each university would every year renounce the hope of quiet residence in a college, or of domestic comfort in a rural parish, there would be men enough at the disposal of the Church to officer every outlying post of her work—and while

her efforts would be felt to the uttermost parts of the earth, they would be felt still more in every haunt of sin and misery at home: every prison, and every ship, and every mine, every refuge and house of mercy, would have its visiting minister; and the lost sheep would have their pastor no less than the ninety and nine that went not astray.

And as on Sunday last I drew attention to the future lives of the children in your parochial schools, reminding you what joy and comfort it would be to feel certain that every one of our brave soldiers was prepared to die, and how touching it would be to any pastor to receive a message from a dying soldier to tell him that, in his last moments, he had been comforted by a prayer taught him in his parish-school: so now, I would awaken an interest of the same kind in behalf of your School Association, for which offerings are collected to-day in all the churches in Cambridge, by looking forward to the future life of many of your scholars as emigrants and colonists. I can tell you that there is scarcely anything more cheering to me in my distant diocese than to meet an old parishioner, especially an old pupil; and to find him raised by the blessing of God upon his industry, from the position of a labourer to a state of comfort and independence, and to be met at once with the hearty inquiry, "Well, what can I do for you? we must have a

church and a school, and I will give my mite. My oxen shall draw the timber free of expense; and we will all help to clear the ground." Now, my dear brethren, this actually happens in New Zealand again and again, and proves, I think beyond a doubt, that our English schools may raise up many an Abraham to pay tithe to his Melchizedek, in places far removed out of your sight; for such is now the extent of the colonial empire of Britain, and such the outpouring of our population, that every faithful pastor and teacher of a school may have scholars praying for him at every hour of the day and night; and a seed of piety and Christian love sown in any one of your Old Schools may bear fruit an hundred and a thousand fold, and be the means of building churches in places which you can never visit, and of converting souls which you will never meet; till you and they shall be gathered from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON IV.

JOHN XVII. 21.

That they may all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

WE have been occupied on three former occasions with a rapid survey of the field of Christian work, as it lies before us in England and in the Colonies, and our attention has been drawn incidentally to some of the much-disputed questions of the present day, with a view to shew their insignificance, not indeed in themselves, but as compared with the work itself; and so to encourage a spirit of practical zeal, rather than of speculative inquiry. We come to-day to consider the Mission field, the last and widest application of the subject.

In the Ramsden Sermon of this year on the words of the second Psalm, every effort and all success in missionary work was referred to the

intercession of the Son of God, in answer to whose prayers we believe that the Father has given Him "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*."

The words of the text place before us another missionary prayer of the Son of God, offered up at that most solemn time when Judas was approaching to betray Him, and when He knew that His hour was come. May our hearts, which have been so cast down by the death of friends and countrymen, seek for comfort in the thought of the death of the Saviour of the world; for in the midst of war there is no other refuge to which we can fly, but to the Prince of Peace, and to His Gospel.

We may see Him still, by the eye of faith, praying, at the right hand of God, that all may be one; and commanding the rulers of this world to put up their swords into the sheath, and enjoining His own servants not to fight for Him, because His kingdom is not of this world. And we can believe Him to be still speaking to us in the words of the dying legacy which He left to His disciples, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid†." And we can hear Him sending out His disciples on the same embassy of peace: "Peace

* Psal. ii. 8. † John xiv. 27.

be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you*."

This is our commission, to bring good tidings and to publish peace: to preach God reconciling the world to Himself, and men at peace one with another. And especially when the missionary to the heathen comes back from his intercourse with simple tribes in the dawn of Christianity, among whom his constant endeavour has been to teach the truth, pure and undefiled, and as it is in Jesus; and when he finds himself in the midst of controversy, such as he knows would unsettle the minds of his native converts, and teach them to doubt rather than to believe, he is naturally led to plead earnestly with his own brethren and countrymen, that they would, in the words of the thirty-fourth psalm, "Seek peace, and ensue it."

For I would ask one plain and pointed question of all who profess to be guided by the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to take His will for their law: Does our blessed Lord approve of all this bitterness of controversy? Is its tone or its language like the words of Him who, though He spake as never man spake, yet left us an example how and what we should speak. While we are multiplying causes for division, can we be acting in the spirit of our Lord's prayer that "all may be one"?

* John xx. 19 and 21.

I am well aware that the power of that prayer is often frittered away by being explained as meaning nothing more than an inward and spiritual union of hearts between Christian men, and not an outward conformity of action, or unity of system. But certainly the first Christians were not content with this, when they not only thought alike, but acted alike, when "all that believed were together," and continued "daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart*;" and when "the multitude of them that believed was of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common†."

But we must seek for a higher reason still for believing it to be our duty, not only to think, but also to act together. For our Lord Himself prays, "that we all may be one, as He and the Father are one." No one, surely, will maintain that the union of the Father and the Son is only an inward and spiritual union, and not an union in act and deed: no one will separate the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, by which the Lamb was foreordained to die, or the eternal Spirit by which the Son "offered Himself without spot to God‡," from the actual completion of this mystery of godliness,

* Acts ii. 44 and 46. † Acts iv. 32. ‡ Heb. ix. 14.

when the Father gave His only-begotten Son to die for sinners: and when the Son, to do His Father's will, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. There was no division between the Father and the Son, either in the eternal counsel, or in the actual completion. If, in the extremity of His mortal agony, He prayed that, "if it were possible, the cup might pass from Him," it was but for a moment; and the next words followed immediately: "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done*." It follows then, I think, that all those who would live after their Lord's example, ought to be united in act, as well as in heart.

There is yet another practical reason contained in our blessed Lord's missionary prayer, and that is, that the unity of all Christians was to be the sign by which the world would be led to believe that God had sent Him. "That they all may be one, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." And exactly to the same point are our blessed Lord's words in John xiii. 35: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And history teaches us that this was the evidence which was powerful with the pagans in old time, when they exclaimed with astonishment, "Behold, how these Christians love one another."

* Luke xxii. 42.

I leave it to others to judge of the effect of divisions here at home. Some may think that zeal is quickened, and that therefore good is done, by the rivalry of religious opinions; and they quote Phil. i. 18, where St Paul rejoices, "that in every way Christ is preached." But though St Paul there rejoices that Christ is preached, even though it were "of envy and strife," of "contention," and "in pretence," must we not believe that he would have rejoiced infinitely more if he could have seen all men agreeing to preach Christ of "good will," and "of love," "sincerely," and "in truth"? It is one thing to rejoice in the overruling Providence of God which brings good out of evil; and it is another and a widely different thing, to acquiesce in the evil, because by God's Providence it has been made the means of good. The same Lord, who prayed that all might be one, foretold that His Gospel should not bring peace upon earth, but rather division*. And yet there is no one of us who doubts on which side is the mind of Christ, or whether His example points to peace or to division, to the olive-branch or to the sword.

Perhaps even on this lower ground of practice and experience, if we were to go below the surface, we should find a vast amount of unsuspected evil, resulting directly from the speculative and contro-

* Luke xii. 51.

versial manner in which religion is taught. If it could be proved that the crowded congregations of our churches and chapels of all religious persuasions represent fairly and fully the state of religion in the mass of the people, we might then rejoice with St Paul, even in the midst of much strife and contention, that in any way Christ is preached. But if we have reason to suspect, or rather to know, that under this fair and visible surface of religion, agitated indeed by waves, but sparkling with sunbeams from heaven, there lies a dark and stagnant, and unfathomable depth of infidelity; millions who believe nothing; and if we have reason to think that their unbelief is caused by our divisions, and that they would have been brought home to Christ, if they had seen us more loving and more united among ourselves, both in doctrine and in practice, then indeed, if this be so, we may well tremble, lest these controversies, which we excuse, as incentives to zeal, should be found to have been stumbling-blocks to our brethren, and we the men by whom the offence came.

I speak of course with diffidence of anything that relates to the state of religion in England, but I am bold to speak of that which I have seen and heard in the Mission field. There, I assert without fear of contradiction, schism is looked upon as an acknowledged evil. There may be the utmost

charity and brotherly kindness among the missionaries themselves; but that is not enough: no inward and spiritual unity can act as an outward evidence: the keen-sighted native convert soon detects a difference of system; and thus religion brings disunion instead of harmony and peace.

I seem then to be justified in drawing you to this conclusion, that religious strife is wrong in principle, and also proved experimentally to be injurious to the progress of the Gospel. We make a rule never to introduce controversy among a native people, or to impair the simplicity of their faith. If the fairest openings for missionary effort lie before us, yet if the ground has been pre-occupied by any other religious body, we forbear to enter. And I can speak with confidence upon this point, from observation ranging over nearly one-half of the Southern Pacific Ocean, that wherever this law of religious unity is adopted, there the Gospel has its full and unchecked and undivided power: wherever the servants of Christ endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, there the native converts are brought to the knowledge of one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all*.

Nature itself has so divided our Mission field, that each labourer may work without interference

* Ephes. iv. 5, 6.

with his neighbour. Every island, circled with its own coral reef, is a field in which each missionary may carry out his own system with native teachers, trained under his own eye, and obedient to his will; grateful and loving men, with no pride of private judgment to interfere with their teacher's plans: children in obedience, but men in action: ready at a moment to put their lives in their hands, and go out to preach the Gospel to other islands, and there to encounter every danger that pestilence, or famine, or violence, may bring upon them: with no weapon but prayer, and with no refuge but in God. It is my happy lot to visit these island missions, some occupied by missionaries of our own race, and some by native teachers; and to see the work of the Gospel in every state of progress, from the simple teacher just landed from his mission-ship among a people of unknown language and savage manners, to the same teacher, after a few years, surrounded by his scholars and ministering in his congregation, his chapel and dwelling-house built by their hands, and himself supported by their offerings.

Many of these islands I visited in their days of darkness, and therefore I can rejoice in the light that now bursts upon them, from whatever quarter it may come. I feel that there is an episcopate of love, as well as of authority; and that these simple teachers, scattered over the wide ocean, are objects

of the same interest to me that Apollos was to Aquila. I find them instructed in the way of the Lord, fervent in spirit, speaking and teaching diligently the things of the Lord; and if in anything they lack knowledge, it seems to be our duty to expound to them "the way of God more perfectly*:" and to do this, as their friend and brother, not as "having dominion over their faith, but as helper of their joy†." Above all other things, it is our duty to guard against inflicting upon them the curses of our disunion, lest we make every little island in the ocean a counterpart of our own divided and contentious Church.

And further, I would point to the Mission field as the great outlet for the excited and sensitive spirit of the Church at home. There are minds, by nature intolerant of rule, in whom not even the spirit of the Gospel can implant an acquiescence in anything which they believe to be an error. In them learning and research only multiply the causes which make them dissatisfied with the state to which God has called them. They have placed before their minds an ideal perfection which can never be realized on earth. They burn with a zeal for God which cannot bear to be confined. Shall we taunt such men as rebels to their Church, and drive them out on one side or the other, as their

* Acts xviii. 26. † 2 Cor. i. 24.

peculiar opinions lead them towards Rome, or towards Dissent? Such men would be the very salt of the earth, if they would but go out into the Mission field. There are five hundred millions of heathen still waiting for the Gospel. Surely, in the crowded cities of India or of China, in the vast plains of Africa, or among the unnumbered islands of the Pacific Ocean, there can be a place found where every tender conscience may be free, according to its own judgment, to serve God, and to win souls to Christ. Oh! if the world could but be peopled with such men! In the words of Moses: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them*." Would that they could hear a voice saying to them, "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles†." Thus would they find satisfaction for their zeal in the free and unbounded range of the Mission field: and the Church at home released from her heartburnings and suspicions, would still rejoice to number them among the most faithful of her sons.

But how, you will ask, shall truth of doctrine be maintained, if we tolerate in the Mission field every form of error, and provide no safeguard for the purity of the faith? I answer first, that, as running water purifies itself, so Christian work is

* Numb. xi. 29. † Acts xxii. 21.

seen, under God's blessing, to correct its own mistakes. We have no reason to believe that God judges with severity the work of willing but feeble instruments. There may be a special blessing upon the mission work for that very reason, because its agents, like the first apostles, are often uninstructed men. When I reflect that it is only forty years since the first missionary landed in New Zealand, and that, for the first ten years or more, the work was carried out by lay catechists, and yet that the whole nation, so far as I am able to judge, comparing man with man, are as worthy of the name of Christians, as our own people of England, I cannot see reason to doubt the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon every missionary work undertaken in simple faith, or to fear lest that Spirit should fail to fulfil, to those who need it most, the promise, that He will guide them into all truth. We read that there were disciples at Ephesus who were baptized with the baptism of John. It pleased God to send to them St Paul to baptize them in the name of the Lord Jesus*. Apollos did his best to teach "diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John†." It pleased God, in like manner, to send to him Aquila and Priscilla, to expound to him the way of God more perfectly.

* Acts xix. † Acts xviii. 25.

But it may be said that the danger of error will come from the men of learning, who may go out to seek in the Mission field the peace which they fail to find at home. No: the work itself will humble them. They must be content to teach something very far short of that ideal and transcendental precision of doctrine, which the power of at least four expressive languages, blended in one, has enabled them to state with a force and accuracy, eloquent indeed to all who can understand, but incapable of being translated into any native language, or explained to any simple people. Their work also will correct its own errors, as it did in the case of the most learned of the apostles. They will go among their people, "not with excellency of speech or of wisdom," but determined not to know anything among them, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified*. Their speech and preaching will not be with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power†.

Is it then a hope too unreasonable to be entertained that the power which will heal the divisions of the Church at home, may come from her distant fields of missionary work? It is not in vain that the Son of God is praying at His Father's right hand that all may be one. Are not the words of Isaiah fulfilled? "Lift up thine eyes round about,

* 1 Cor. ii. 1. † 1 Cor. ii. 4.

and see: all these gather themselves together; they come to thee*;" "a great multitude whom no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues†," all come to Christ, to the one central fountain of living water. And if these be the signs that His second advent is at hand, shall the world come to an end, and the Church meet its God, in a state of religious bitterness, in which every one of us would be afraid to die? Shall strife embitter the last days of that Church for which Christ Jesus prayed with his dying breath that it might be one? As we approach nearer to the day when all things will be revealed, surely we ought to be able to read with a clearer light the Oracles of God, and see more distinctly the way that leads to heaven. But if the light within us be darkness, if the increase of knowledge, the multiplication of Bibles, the study of the original languages of Holy Scripture; if every aid that history, and geography, and science give to the interpretation of the Word of God, or to the general enlargement of the mind; if all these aids to knowledge leave us still as much in doubt as before; ever questioning what the truth is, but never finding the answer; it does not follow that the Bible is not truth, or that Christ is not light; but that the light *in us* is darkness: and the cause of the darkness is, because the eye

* Isai. xlix. 18. † Rev. vii. 9.

is not single. We have bodies of Christian men ranged in battle array one against another, to maintain their own opinions: we have hard words of controversy, which few understand and fewer still define: we have names of party, which we fling about like firebrands: we have separate interests to maintain,—trusts bequeathed for the propagation of the opinions of the founder—names of men—and rights of property—and titles of honour;—and it is no wonder if, in this strange medley of perplexities, we cannot find the truth which we profess to seek. But let any two men meet in the spirit in which Aquila met Apollos, really to seek by prayer for the Spirit of God to guide them into all truth: let them set aside every human prejudice, and strive to have that mind in them which is in Christ Jesus: let them take the Bible, and the Bible only, as their guide, and humbly use every aid which God has given them for the understanding of His Word: in such a course of inquiry, who can doubt that as they draw nearer every day to Christ, they will also be united one with another? And to desire this unity of heart and of act, to pray for it, to "seek peace, and ensue it*," is no less the duty of every Christian than faith itself.

And now, my dear friends and brethren, and especially the younger members of this University,

* 1 Pet. iii. 11.

I commend you to the grace of God's Holy Spirit, which alone can comfort you under the sorrows, and strengthen you in the trials of the life which is opening upon you. Gird up the loins of your soul, for these are no common times in which your lot is cast. Young men of the present day have need of the firmness and of the faith of martyrs. Into whatever profession you may enter, your powers will be tested to the uttermost. When death comes close to us in its most dreadful forms, brothers, kinsmen, friends, lost in a moment, what stronger argument can we have to teach us always to live in such a state, as never to be afraid to die?

And if it please God to call you to a more peaceful lot, to the work of the ministry in England—in the colonies—or in the mission field, you will learn to think all things light, which you can do or suffer in the cause of Christ, when you see what the service is which the world exacts. And yet our work also has no narrow compass. I go from hence, if it be the will of God, to the most distant of all countries—to the place where God, in answer to the prayers of His Son, has given Him "the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession*." There God has planted the standard of the Cross,

* Psal. ii. 8.

as a signal to His Church to fill up the intervening spaces, till there is neither a spot of earth which has not been trodden by the messengers of salvation, nor a single man to whom the Gospel has not been preached. Fill up the void. Let it be no longer a reproach to the universities that they have sent so few missionaries to the heathen. The Spirit of God is ready to be poured out upon all flesh; and some of you are His chosen vessels. Again I say, Offer yourselves to the Primate of our Church. The voice of the Lord is asking: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" May every one of you who intends, by God's grace, to dedicate himself to the ministry, answer at once:

"Here am I; send me*."

* Isai. vi. 8.

THE END.

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